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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/748,733	12/30/2003	Dwight P. Morejohn	GUID-036	7537
36154 7590 03/04/2009 LAW OFFICE OF ALAN W. CANNON 942 MESA OAK COURT SUNNYVALE, CA 94086				
EXAMINER MAL HAO'D				
ART UNIT 3732		PAPER NUMBER		
MAIL DATE 03/04/2009		DELIVERY MODE PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/748,733

Applicant(s)

MOREJOHN ET AL.

Examiner

HAO D. MAI

Art Unit

3732

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 September 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 11, 13-30, 44 and 45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2, 16-19, 21 and 23-30 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 11, 13-15, 20, 22, 44-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.1143

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 08/12/2008 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 11, 13-15, 20, 22, and 45, rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- Claim 11 recites "free end" and "free end portion" which are inconsistent, rendering ambiguity whether the two limitations are the same. This also amounts to lack of antecedent bases.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Koros (5,908,382).

Koros et al. disclose a retractor 10 (Fig. 1) capable of providing transabdominal access, comprising upper spreader portion 28 and lower spreader portion 16; wherein the spreader portions are positioned relative to each other that they are capable of opening the incision 90 and producing a substernal space for access to the heart (Fig. 1). The upper spreader portion 18 is capable of lifting the sternal area and comprising a hook 52 mounted to a retraction mechanism 28 comprising a screw 58 via a swivel 48 (Figs. 1-2; column 3 lines 2-5). The lower spreader portion comprising a depressor surface 15 capable of engaging the diaphragm and abdominal organs to depress the abdomen at the incision. The depressor surface is shown to have a tongue depress-like structure.

6. Claims 11, 13-15, 20, and 45, are further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Santilli et al. (6,099,468).

Regarding claim 11, Santilli et al. disclose a transabdominal access system 10 comprising: an upper spreader portion 46 and a lower spreader portion 82 being positioned relative to each other to produce a substernal space (Figs. 1-2). The upper spreader portion 46 includes a pair of hooks 78 and 80 each having a free end portion independent of the other and capable of lifting the patient's sternal area. The lower spreader portion 22 comprises depressor surface 82 that can positioned to underlay the pair of hooks (by adjusting bar portion 22 along bar 24 towards bar 20). The depressor surface 14 is capable of engaging the diaphragm and abdominal organs and has a free end portion. The free ends of the depressor surface 82 and the two hooks 78, 80, can all be adjusted to extend in a substantially same direction.

Art Unit: 3732

Alternatively, it can be said that all three free end *portions* each as a whole is extending downward; thus they are all extending in the same (downward) direction.

As to 13-15, each of the pair of hooks 78, 80, comprising a lifting surface capable of lifting a patient's sternal area. Also note the first and second side portions (bars 20 and 22) can be positioned and configured between upper and lower spreader portions; the first and second side portions 20, 22, are integrally, i.e. forming a whole or one piece, connected to the upper and lower portions.

As to claim 20 and 45, the upper spreader portion 46 comprising a retraction mechanism 54/66 capable of lifting the rib cage by adjusting the rods 84 of hooks 78 and 80; and the depressor surface 82 both having a tongue depressor-like structure (Figs. 1-2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. **Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Santilli et al. in view of Jascalevich (3,710,783).**

Santilli et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed according to claim 11. Santilli discloses sliding the rod 84 through a bore knob 66 in order to retract the hook 78. Therefore, Santilli et al. fail to disclose the upper spreader portion comprising a screw mechanism for lifting and retracting (claim 22). Jascalevich discloses a retractor rod D comprising outer threads for adjusting the rod through knob 62 as a retracting and lifting

Art Unit: 3732

mechanism (Fig. 1). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Santilli et al. by substituting such screw mechanism as a suitable alternative retracting and lifting mechanism that would result in the same and/or predictable results.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed 09/25/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive and/or moot in view of new ground(s) of rejection. Applicant argued that Santilli et al. do not disclose the depressor surface underlying the hooks and the end portions extending in substantially the same direction. It is maintained that Santilli's depressor surface 82 that can be positioned to underlay the pair of hooks (by adjusting bar portion 22 along bar 24 towards bar 20); and the free ends of the depressor surface 82 and the two hooks 78, 80, can all be adjusted to extend in a substantially same direction. Alternatively, it can be said that all three free end portions each as a whole is extending downward; thus they are all extending in the same (downward) direction.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HAO D. MAI whose telephone number is (571)270-3002. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Cris Rodriguez can be reached on (571) 272-4964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3732

11. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

**/Hao D Mai/
Examiner, Art Unit 3732**

/Cris L. Rodriguez/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3732